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The Christian Century
PULPIT
A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME 1 | CHICAGO, APRIL, 1930 | NUMBER 7

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The First Easter

BY BURRIS JENKINS

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. John 20:1.

OUTSIDE the present walls of the city of Jerusalem rises a rounded hill called Gordon's Calvary. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher inside the walls is built over the traditional site of Calvary and the tomb of Christ; but "Chinese" Gordon, studying the Holy City and its environs with his keen, clear vision, found this other hill on the north side beyond the Damascus Gate, shaped like a skull, with two caverns like empty eye-sockets staring toward the city. Of course, those caves may or may not have been there for two thousand years, but certainly the present appearance of that hill tallies exactly with the description of Golgotha, the place of a skull. At the foot of the cliff, on the city-ward side, there is a tomb, undoubtedly two thousand years old, hewn in the solid rock, with a great stone, flat and round like a mill-stone, six feet across, rolls in a groove to cover the mouth of the tomb. It was in just such a sepulcher, and I think most probably in this very sepulcher, that the Lord lay.

The Terrible Procession

Nine o'clock of a bright, sunny spring morning, and the Passover campers on the summit of Calvary, standing at the flaps of their black goat's-hair tents, shaded their eyes and studied intently a strange procession that came pouring out of the Damascus Gate as through a bottle neck. First the [illegible] flashed upon [illegible] diery, helmets, cuirasses, [illegible] morning light, a [illegible]

25 Cents a Copy Entered as second-class matter October 14, 1929, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 440 [illegible] St., Chicago, Ill.

In the middle of the group came three prisoners, their hands bound and tied together with a long rope. All three were bowed under their own crosses, when one stumbled and fell; he had been scourged until his young strength was all gone; then they seized upon a black man, a Cyrenian, and laid the cross upon his shoulders and made him carry it. Through the gate behind the soldiers strode the most important men in Jerusalem, chief priests, members of the senate called the Sanhedrin, their multicolored garments glowing like rich flowers in the early morning light; then a constantly swelling crowd of thousands, morbid curiosity seekers, come to behold an execution. The campers on the hillsides came running to swell the concourse, until, when it reached the summit of the rounded hill, only those closest to the Roman legionaries could see what was going on. The others heard the heavy strokes of the sledge as the nails were driven home into the crosses; and then they could see plainly the victims, when the crosses were lifted high and dropped into their sockets in the ground. Who were these culprits? A young rabbi, who claimed to be a son of David and king of Israel, and two robbers, wild fellows captured somewhere down towards Jericho.

All in the Day's Work

From nine till twelve the crowd milled and surged over the top of that skull-like hill. The Romans sat down, in a circle round the crosses, to keep their patient death watch. It was all in the day's work for them. Hadn't they done it many a time? They gambled for the garments, rolling huge dice in a helmet, and throwing them upon a cloak spread on the ground. These two robbers they could understand; but this young rabbi—it seemed strange that they had to kill so harmless and even so kind a youth as he seemed to be. Their officer, the captain, a patrician with quicker brains than the common run of these old regulars, especially studied the face of the Galilean, listened with perplexity to his strange words, watched his superhuman self-control, examined with intentness the few friends that managed to worm their way through the crowds to the foot of the cross. Those women yonder—yes, that must be his mother, supported by two others, one at each arm. That tall, keen youth, with the oaken arms and legs, a Galilean too, looks like a fisherman. What's that the young rabbi is saying, as his agonized eyes turn from his mother and light upon this youth? "Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy mother." Oh, yes, it is his last will and testament, giving away the only thing he's got to give, his mother. The captain shook his head. Strange doings! These fanatical people, what will they do next? Well, Rome doesn't care, just so there are no riots and the taxes are paid.

Noon comes. What's this? The earth is shaking. Are we going to have another of those infernal earthquakes? It is upon us. The crosses are reeling in their holes in the ground, swaying back and forth; [illegible] come pouring up; certain houses in the [illegible] on fire; aqueducts broken, no water; still worse, here rolls a storm up from the southwest, clouds, lightning; it is dark as pitch here in the middle of the day; rocks are split and come rolling down the hillside endangering people's lives. This great crowd, crazed with fear, is milling worse than ever and the legionaries, now on their feet, with spears braced to repel a possible attempt at rescue, are standing ringed round the crosses. All in the day's work! They've been under the clouds of battle many a time, but there's something different here. Nevertheless, discipline never fails. Frightened, half-choked voices out yonder in the crowd are calling friends and neighbors: "Simon Peter, I say, where are you?" "Here I am, John, little John Mark." "Lazarus, it's Mary. Come here! Hold on to me, Martha." Hours pass, three of them, and it is still dark in the middle of the afternoon. The earth still trembles and shakes; torches dance about. A messenger comes running to Caiaphas, the chief priest: "Your Holiness, the great veil in the temple, a handbreadth thick, is split from top to bottom. The columns are still standing, though shaken badly out of place. The temple will not fall." By three o'clock the storm has passed; the earth has settled; the sun, a sickly yellow disc, hangs over the Mediterranean, and the light slowly comes back. The three on the crosses still live; yes, they will live three days unless something is done. They must not live beyond sundown; that would profane the Sabbath, which begins at six. Two or three more hours of daylight and this matter will have to be attended to. Their legs can be broken with the sledge; that will finish them off properly. Sunset, only a few minutes to go. Heavy blows against the crosses and the two robbers are dead. Then the brawny soldier swings toward the young rabbi. "Never mind, let him be," growls the captain, "Dead already. Did you ever see that before? Would you pound to pieces a corpse? Who is this man?"

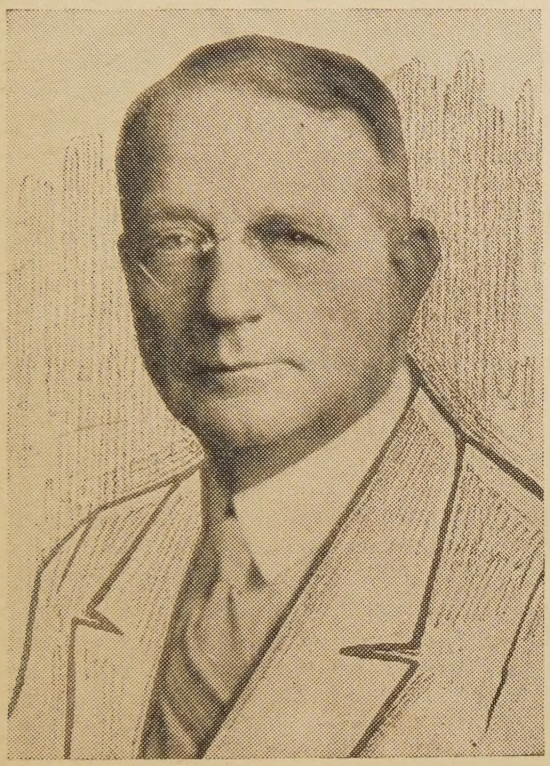
Killing a God

Here comes an important-looking fellow, a big man by the look of him, thinks the captain, as he comes swinging through the crowd, what is left of it, elbowing right and left. "I'm Joseph, Joseph of Arimathea; here's Pilate's order. I want the body of that young man." "And you're welcome," says the captain, "More than welcome. And I hope you'll treat him right. Who is he, anyhow?" "We had hoped he was the Messiah." The captain, pale and shaken, stumbles about over the almost deserted hillside, panting heavily, his feet leaden, and wondering to himself, "What's the matter with me? Have you never seen men die before? I don't like this day's business. I think we've killed a god."

What's happening over there by the precipice, above the two staring eye-sockets in the face of the cliff? The captain's eyes, alert in spite of all his anxiety, see a scrawny, red-bearded figure poised at the edge of the bluff, a tattered red robe fluttering in the wind about it, a rope about its neck, fastened to an olive branch that overhangs the face of the rock. Suddenly the red figure leaps out, sways and swings like a spider

at the end of its thread, the rope snaps, and Judas comes hurtling down a hundred feet to rebound against the rocks. His very abdomen is torn open, and his little day is done.

Darkness now. Long after darkness, in spite of the Sabbath, Joseph and his retainers toil over the body, its young face composed and peaceful, winding it in linen, bestowing it in the new tomb; and by the light of torches they roll the great stone across the mouth. Here come two Roman soldiers. Will they never let him be? "Pilate sent us to seal up this tomb. Don't you see the great seal? They'll not break this wax in a hurry. Let's see them do it." They heat the wax and pour it and seal it. Then methodically they sit



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down and begin shaking dice as to which shall sleep first and which shall keep watch. Silence at last and the brooding night. Rest at last and the great task done.

A little knot of frightened and huddled and dispirited Galileans, in a cellar, under an out-of-the-way house just inside the Damascus Gate. "It's all up," groans their leader, the shaggy Simon Peter, his head between his big horny hands, his elbows on his knees. "At dawn I start back for Galilee. I go a-fishing." "But it's the Sabbath," hesitates Thomas. "Sabbath or no Sabbath—what did our Master care about the Sabbath? But he's done now." A little knot of crushed and broken women in a vine-clad villa in Bethany. One man only, the young man Lazarus, to try to comfort them. Mary, the mother, prostrate, terribly silent, tearless. Mary kneeling beside her, and Martha bringing water and hartshorn. Mary Magdalene on the floor beside the couch, her forehead bowed upon it. And Mary of the long hair in a corner, over by those crimson hangings, her bowed head on the window sill. It's all over! The end! Failure, ignominy, the cross, the curse!

A Listless Passover

A dead Sabbath and another dead night. Silence over the whole city. Even the Passover rejoicing is hollow and half-hearted. The very rulers themselves are dismayed. Things haven't worked out as they planned and the people are hot-hearted, restless, unhappy. The remark of the captain has got about, "We have killed a god." Slowly that second night drags out its length and the gray dawn is ready to appear. Two women have been walking in the night, over the hill called Olivet, down into the valley of the Kedron, past the garden called Gethsemane, the little olive orchard. "Here he was taken," said Mary Magdalene, as they passed beneath the olive trees. Then round the northeast corner of the city wall, skirting the north side to the Damascus Gate, and to the foot of Calvary. They wondered as they went, their cruses of spices and perfume in their hands, how they would get that stone away from the tomb. They knew nothing of the seal. "What's that light?" exclaimed Mary of Bethany. A soft radiance shone in the garden. It came from the mouth of the tomb. When they got there the stone was already rolled away. He was no longer there! Then the dawn came stealing up over the summit of the Mount of Olives—dusk, then broad day, then the sun. The first Easter morning burst over the world, clear and radiant. A revulsion of new hope thrilled and throbbed through these two young women's hearts. They turned and ran, no longer walked but ran. They found that cellar in the city and that little broken company of men, not yet gone a-fishing. They told them the news, the tomb was empty, the Master risen. The tragedy was over, and life and light had taken the place of darkness and of death!

I don't know what happened after that. I don't know what happened that Easter morning. I only know that something strange and wonderful occurred, that all those people, friends and followers of his, on that first Easter morning became convinced beyond all shadow of doubt that he was not dead but alive again. I only know that there is nothing in classic history, two thousand years old, half so well attested as the unbroken life of that young rabbi. I only know that for two thousand years that life has been growing in reality, in intensity, and in power upon this earth. And that is enough for me. I only know that out of that life and out of the words he spoke comes the surest hope for all the rest of us that we, too, shall have our Easter morning, that the grave cannot hold us any more than it held him.

The Great Hope

The world has always cherished its hope of immortality; in all nations and in all times the idea has been there; some have desired to escape it and some to enjoy it, but the idea is ineradicable, innate, inherent in every

human heart. I know that millions in India and elsewhere in the far east desire nothing so much as extinction, oblivion, loss of consciousness through absorption into the infinite; but whether desirable or undesirable, according to one's rearing, early environment, or the personal equation, the essential thing in our thought is that the idea is there, and there is no ridding ourselves of it. This is some intimation, at least, of the reality for which that idea stands.

It is, however, the word of Jesus and the experience of Jesus which is to my mind the most solid ground of belief in immortality. He claimed to know; and he never claimed to know anything that was not true. We have tried him out for two thousand years, tested his words as no other words have ever been tested, applied his precepts to our life and found them true and workable; increasingly all the time we are putting to the proof in our institutions, our relations social and ethical, yes, and even commercial and legal, the principles he gave the world; and we have never found him in error. How could he fail to be right, then, when he talks about immortality, the persistence of personality after death, this most vital matter which, in moments of sorrow and of loss, concerns us every one? He said to that crucified robber on one side of him, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He said to his perplexed disciples on that night when he predicted his death, his last night with them, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." His utterance is the best authority I have for believing that I shall see again those whom I have loved long since and lost awhile; and I hold it eminently reasonable to believe him, for he claimed to know.

Philosophers and Scientists Believe

There are many other intimations which ought to steady our minds in the line of thinking, even if there are no demonstrations. The fact that all the great intellects, practically without exception, who have left words behind them through the centuries, from Socrates and Plato on down to the most modern times, I mean the first-rate minds, have attested their belief in the continuance of life after death. Our own leading scientists of today, I mean the greatest of them, cherish the same hope and belief. One has good company, the bravest and the strongest minds go along with him, who believe that it is not all of life to live nor all of death to die, that death is no more mysterious than birth, and no less beautiful, that death indeed is life's most beautiful adventure.

It is reasonable to believe in immortality, and it is not reasonable to disbelieve in it. The logic of disbelief here is the conclusion that this is a chaotic world and a meaningless universe, that all these planets and suns swing round in purposeless orbits, that it is getting nowhere, going nowhere, has no end or aim, is harsh, cruel, and unreasonable. Yet more chaotic than this world and and all these worlds is the tangled, unjust, blind, and suffering existence of man, unless somewhere and somewhen there is an end to be attained, a purpose to serve, a peace to be found. If there is no immortality, then is God unfair, unjust, unscrupulous, and there is no God. To believe the latter is much more unreasonable than to believe the former, to believe with Christ that life goes on and on and has no end.

The horrors of the crucifixion day gave way to the darkness, the silence, and the peace of the tomb; then the Sabbath rest of the grave gave way to the dawn of Easter morning and the beginning of the world-wide conquest in the name of the risen Christ. And so it is with human life. Its trial, its injustice, its cross of pain, gives place to rest and calm and peace. The partings and the sorrows have to come, for this is the logic of Calvary. Then comes the dawn of the larger hope, the reunion with the loved and lost, the triumphant beginning, dating from the Easter that belongs to every one of us, of a career enduring, eternal.

The Quest of Immortality

By Chester B. Emerson

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25, 26.

IT IS Easter, the happiest day in all the year, the day when we believe in all the highest and noblest things in life; when we remember our loved ones with tender expectation, when we forget to doubt that truth and purity and justice and love are eternal, that life is worth all its efforts and its miseries for the triumph that shall come to faith.

The hope for immortality has urged men always, from the day when the first man stood God-conquered with his face upturned to the light. In the tombs of every early people are the evidences of their belief in a glory land. And in every literature, poets, preachers, philosophers have voiced their stalwart faith. Homer for the Greeks, Virgil for the Romans, Dante for Italians, Goethe for the Germans, Milton for the English, Emerson for Americans have given expression to the hope that never dies in the human heart. So in Socrates and Plato through the long line of philosophers to Bergson and Eucken and Whitehead. So from the mouths of Moses and the prophets, Peter and the apostles, Luther and the reformers, Tauler and the mystics, Brooks and the preachers, has come the word in all ages: "I die, yet I shall live again." "When we face the best there is in human aspiration and in literature, in valid reasoning and in heroic action we find men living by the power of an endless life." So speaks one writer and we know he speaks truly.

But in the pages of the Book of Life there is a record that gives substance to faith. Here is the story of one who lived and died and rose again, who went among men saying: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live." Here is one who had more than a hope. He had the fact—Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Substance for Faith

There is no question that the disciples believed with not a shadow of doubt that Jesus had risen from the dead and that he had walked and talked with them. Our reasons for doubting their assurance are insecure. The argument that his resurrection was an invention of the disciples is no longer entertained by any competent scholar. Their belief had foundation in fact. Nor is it a tenable theory that Jesus never really died but was spirited away and recovered. When the Romans crucified a man, he was dead. And in this case his enemies in church and state saw to it that they would not longer be tormented by their victim. The spear was a weapon to make assurance doubly sure. And lest there should be a recurrence of that desperate situation Pilate demanded a certificate of death from his executioners before he allowed the body to be removed.

Nor can one impute hallucinations to so many witnesses. The disciples were sturdy men, accustomed to taking life without vain imaginings. Life was real and it was earnest to these men. They were used to its dull, hard, uncompromising facts. It had been difficult for Jesus to get a new idea of messiahship into their heads, after three years of instruction. When he died, their hopes died. They wept and went back to the bitter, unillumined task of drudging out an existence without hope. A word flashed to them from the tomb. A presence joined them on the road and at their feast. They leaped to the task of recreating a world according to his plan, of conquering the Roman empire by his truth. Fishermen became apostles, shepherds went forth as missionaries, all became martyrs—for what? an illusion? Hardly so! The good news of the disciples was corroborated by more than five hundred, some of whom were still living when the gospel was written.

Ample Testimony

And the moral and spiritual growth of the race during nineteen hundred years testifies also to the amazing fact. How else has the morality of mankind been raised? Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. The character of a Francis of Assissi does not grow from the seed of lies. "Was it ever known that a falsehood exercised for ages a quickening and purifying power which no truth can rival?"

And how does human life respond to the fact? Some who disbelieve lead noble and sacrificial lives. Even they perhaps are influenced unconsciously by the atmosphere of Jesus' hopes among men. Most men, however, will follow the lead of the flesh, if flesh after all is the goal, for one can go the way of the flesh and still be a good friend, a loving husband, and a kind father. But let men feel that there is time to work out the problem of righteousness, time to arrive at the far off goal, an assurance that somewhere, "all we have hoped and willed and dreamed of good shall exist"; that eternity shall affirm the noblest of our momentary conceptions; then no matter how hard the task, how seductive the temptation, how deep the sorrow, how bitter the defeat, a man will go on with his living and ask no advantage of ease or evil. He will

> Greet the unseen with a cheer!
> Bid him forward breast and back as either should be,
> "Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed—fight on, fare ever,
> There as here!"

He has learned to trust the moral integrity of God. He knows that the Creator is not less than his creature. Indeed, were it otherwise all hope of moral and spiritual growth would end. Justice sometime will be constant and not intermittent. Righteousness will be permanent and not transient. Love will be universal and not local.

"Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Yea, verily." His moral governance shall vindicate itself. The hopes and fears, the heartaches and tears, the struggles and defeats of men shall not be in vain. The martyrdom of the saints shall be the gateway to their victory. God has not led them up along the stony path of moral achievement to push them over a cliff to death and oblivion. This is my own faith. Like Paul, I base my hopes on these men who walked with him in life and death and who testified that they saw him alive after his crucifixion. And like Paul, I defend my hope also by that inward experience of the risen Christ which changes the whole outlook on life, which gives meaning and purpose to this pageant of dust and glory and makes certain a blessed and beneficent end to struggle. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

How Are the Dead Raised?

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised and with what manner of body do they come?" We know not with what body we shall arise victorious. His own was not immediately recognized by the disciples on the road to Emmaus nor by the gathering in the chamber at Jerusalem. We are not much concerned how our souls shall be housed. We shall be sheltered under the same roof with him and dwell with him. We have begun to do that here. The future will fulfill our present joy. The beginning of the resurrection is the transformation that Jesus can make in a man's life. It is an axiom that we grow like those with whom we live.

No man can abide in Jesus Christ and remain mean in spirit. One by one his prejudices will vanish. One by one his selfish tempers will disappear. He will be transformed toward his likeness. The change of heart and so of life by the indwelling of Christ is the progress of resurrection, and we have it now—that is a blessed fact. What does it matter to us, made as we are, to cherish solely some far distant expectation. We want

to live here and now. What does it matter if sometime we may be forgiven and freed from the follies of the flesh. We want to be saved here and now. What boots it to strain with failing strength after righteousness unless we know one is there to urge us on and if need be lift us over the last impediment. What does it profit us to run the straight race unless he be there to catch us as we fall exhausted across the line. But we do have him. "I *am* the resurrection and the life." Here and now.

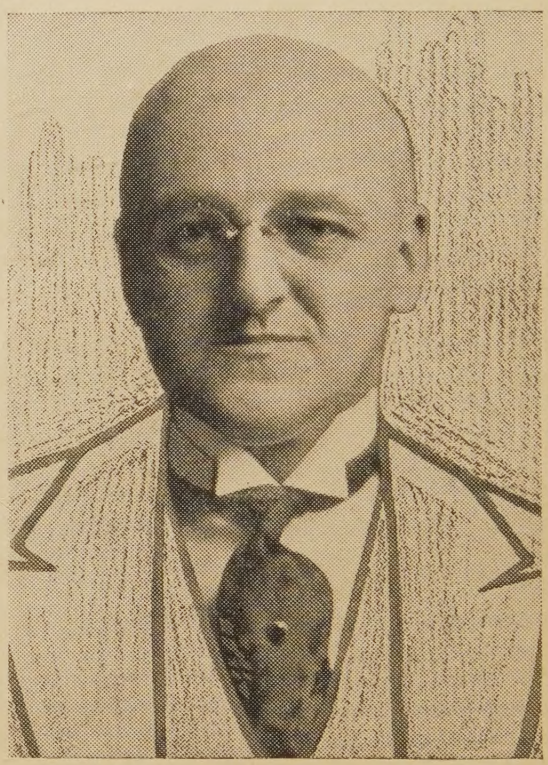
Perhaps I can impress upon you more forcibly the transformation that Jesus makes in human character and the quality of life he conveys by citing an incident from "The Memoirs of Li Hung Chang," that greatest of Chinese statesmen whose name only a few years ago was familiar to every American. I think I found this incident recalled in something Dean Sperry wrote years ago.

Testimony of Li Hung Chang

Li Hung Chang, shrewd, kindly, oriental, was under no false illusion regarding the actual achievements of the gospel in Christendom. When he went back to China from his tour around the world, he carried with him the memory, not of our idealistic institutions, but of our crude, material greatness. "We have our beautiful literature," he said, "far and away ahead of that of the western nations; but they have the money and the guns." What more comprehensive phrase could be used to describe the actualities in the world today than that of this amiable alien, "the money and the guns."

And yet no more eloquent testimony to the true spirit of Christianity was ever given than by this same "grand old man" of China. When he was in Japan negotiating terms at the conclusion of the Chinese-Japanese war, Li Hung Chang was shot and seriously wounded by a madman, and lay for days in a Japanese hospital. After he had recovered and gone back to China he wrote in his diary:

> I cannot think that all people are bad, even the worst of the Christians, for today I had an experience —just an hour ago—that makes me think that outside of office and business, outside of riches and honors, there are small happenings which touch a man's heart, and make him feel that humanity is not all iron and gain and falsehood. For today this yamen, which for twenty-four years had been mine, was the destination of a great mission, such as never came within the compound before. I nearly wept to receive them. Two native Christians came all the way from that miserable town to bring me here medicines for my head, and to see if I was getting better. The man was one of a number of native converts who had called to see me in my sick room. His name, he said, was Sato, and the boy that accompanied him was his thirteen year old son. Sato said that all the native Christians in the little mission—the mission that had first sent the delegation to my sick room with flowers—had talked about me every day since I was there, and had prayed the Christian God for my recovery. He said that they, his mission friends, did not believe in war or killing and that they had understood I had come to put a stop to the war. I wanted them to stay with me for a few days; but Mr. Sato said he was already almost sick unto death to get back home.
>
> I think this Christianity makes poor and lowly people bold and unafraid, for before Mr. Sato and his boy left he wanted to know if they might pray for me. I said they could, expecting that he meant when they got back home again; but he said something to the little son, and they knelt right there at the door and said a prayer. I could not keep my heart from thumping in my bosom as I watched the poor man and his frightened little boy praying to God—the God that will deal with me and with them and with all mankind—that I might be well of my injuries. I was sorry to see them go.
>
> In this old yamen, which for twenty-odd years was mine, strange scenes have been enacted, great councils



Chester B. Emerson

> held, and midnight conferences affecting the whole world have taken place. I have received royalties and dukes, ambassadors, ministers, murderers, robbers, and beggars. Men have been sentenced to death from here, others have been made glad with leases of lands, railroad contracts, or the gift of public office. But during each and every occurrence, whatever its nature, I have been complete master of my house and of myself until an hour ago. Then it was that for the first time I believe that the honor was being conferred upon me.

Such honor and majesty, such power in humility, such grace of character and love of human kind, the alien as well as friend, does Christ give to the humblest of his brethren. A merely mundane Jesus cannot do this. A heavenly Christ can. If such a quality of character, such an endowment of soul is not the essence of immortality, then there is no immortality worth having. The noblest thing that life produces must endure if anything at all endures.

In all our thought of immortality there is too much emphasis placed upon the physical. If God is spirit, how can we locate him in pearly gates and golden streets? These are but symbols taken from our mundane conceptions of ease and comfort. To look forward to some far off and dramatic day when with a great tumult and upheaval we shall be translated into a bejeweled city, where life is a passionless peace and a workless eternity, is an inadequate conception of the future life.

No Heaven Without Problems

As if such a life would be desirable to an alert and active individual. Heaven without problems, without trials, without labors would be no heaven at all.

> Poor vaunt of life, indeed, were man but formed to feed
> On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
> Such feasting ended, then, as sure an end to man.

There is no increase of knowledge save by picking one's way through the dark problems of life. There is no sturdy moral fiber without the trial of our faith, there is no lusty manhood without labors that tax and test us, there is no healing sympathy save what the fires of our own suffering have melted in our hearts. And yet we do not want to live exactly the same experiences under exactly the same circumstances. Few of us desire to live our lives over again—most of us have had enough of this one when our time comes. Most of us then are in the mood of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Evensong":

> The embers of the day are red
> Beyond the murky hill.
> The kitchen smokes: the bed
> In the darkling house is spread:
> The great sky darkens overhead,
> And the great woods are shrill.
> So far have I been led, Lord, by thy will;
> So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.
> The breeze from the embalmed land
> Blows sudden toward the shore,
> And claps my cottage door.
> I hear the signal, Lord—I understand.
> The night at thy command
> Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question more.

And this applies to youth as well as age, for it does not matter when death overtakes us provided we have lived while we have lived and are ready for the summons. If death catch at our sleeve and call a halt upon our work, let it be so. "It is better that it should find us full of enthusiasm for living, our heads busy with generous plans for this world's happiness, our hearts red with hopes and human affections, than that it should waft us as wind does the dead leaf that clings to the branch long after the winter has withered it!"

"We are apt," also says Stevenson, "to make so much of the tragedy of death, and think so little of the enduring tragedy of some men's lives, that we see more to lament in a life cut off in the midst of usefulness and love, than in one that miserably survives all love and usefulness, and goes about the world the phantom of itself, without hope, or joy, or any consolation."

Death is only a journey to another land for which we make our preparation here, sometimes after years of expectation, sometimes hurriedly as one receives an unexpected invitation. Little we know of it and yet it seems less and less strange to us as our anticipation pictures it. Nothing of its geography is clear. And yet some loved ones of ours have journeyed thither and we shall seek them out. It is so many years since we saw them. Fashions have changed. And manners, too. But we shall know them. Perhaps only their spirit remains. But we shall recognize them even more readily because in the waste of years that is all that remains of them even here. We shall be happy to find that all we loved best in them is grown stalwart with the years.

The Geography of Heaven

Live? Yes indeed! We desire to live but under new circumstances and with regenerate abilities. Not easy lives but urgent lives, with strength for each occasion. For, after all, heaven is not a negative happiness or a routine good. There will be struggles still, lest virtue grow vain with too much praise. There will be occupations still and not all musical. We shall have opportunity to grow like what we will to be. We shall be forever losing ourselves in sacrificial endeavors and finding ourselves recreated thereby. That which was too high for us here we shall attain; that which was hard will still be hard but we shall have strength to overcome.

So many of our conceptions of heaven are unmanly. They are the illusions that we permit ourselves when we are weary with our work which yields so small a return; when we are weighed with grief and dreaming of a time when tears may never flow again for separations that wring the heart of its last refreshing joy; when we are crushed with defeats we did not deserve and yet could not forfend. We dream of ease that would pall upon a soul grown used to labor and its sweet reward. We hope for days so sunny that we would cry aloud for rain to awaken our dying appreciations. We pray for victories which would make us at last as selfish as a sated soul. The day is light for darkness passed away. Joy is dear for sorrows smilingly endured. Victory is elate for reverses bravely encountered. Peace is full for warfares accomplished. Things are eternally balanced. Too much of one or the other will spoil men or break them.

Heaven Wrongly Conceived

Whenever Jesus spoke of heaven's rewards it was as a crown of *life*—not shining possessions which one might string like beads around the soul, but abundant life within the soul. More life, fuller of challenge but fuller of capacity. Freedom from the ignorance that keeps us forever stumbling along here, making mistakes, or wasting effort in futile pursuits, bruising where we meant to be gentle, confusing situations we desired to make clear. Freedom from limitations,

physical and spiritual, that prevent a more active and beneficent participation in life's affairs. To run instead of walk, to leap instead of crawl, to plunge into the midst of driving forces and bring order out of chaos, justice out of wrong doing, good out of the confusion of evil. To feel that if you could really see the vision you would have strength to realize it. To know that once you had found his will you could do it as your heart desired.

Life in freedom and in fullness—and of the kind that Jesus found it possible to live here. Earth, then, is not so different from heaven. What is good here is good there. What is brave here is brave there. Here he lived among us—equal to all emergencies, firm in temptation, persistent in his calling, able to resist in trial, patient in sorrow, uncrushed by failure, a warrior in life, a victor in death.

Companions of Jesus Now

And so we assert that this heavenly life is for any one of us who companies with Jesus now. Not a remote possibility, but a blessed beginning today. A man may have it now and in having it he has begun to live his immortality. It is a gift unconditioned by time. For whether he lives a score of years or threescore years or a millennium, it is all the same. What he has here, he has there. A change of the spirit's dwelling does not alter the character of the spirit itself. Provided one lives in Christ's spirit and fulfills his noblest function while he does live, he is unconcerned when his marching orders may come. He is ready to arise and go to his Father. The expedition into new and untried country will occasion no alarm. He is ready for its exigencies.

And likewise is it with him who lives an unpreparing life—for base and mean will be base and mean still. We are what we are, and that conditions what we may become. It is the same old soul that takes the road again—

All that I rightly think or do,
Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,
Is curse or blessing justly due
For sloth or effort in the past,
My life's a statement of the sum
Of vice indulged, or overcome.

And I shall know, in angry words,
In gibes, and mocks, and many a tear.
A carrion flock of homing birds,
The gibes and scorns I uttered here,
The brave word that I failed to speak
Will brand me dastard in the cheek.

And as I wander on the roads,
I shall be helped and healed and blessed;
Dear words shall cheer and be as goads
To urge to heights before unguessed;
My road shall be the road I made,
All that I gave shall be repaid.

And these words of Masefield perhaps express what we mean by the "judgment."

For the spirit to break through the dull brown case of its confinement and issue with power into a larger life of effort and appreciation is to rise from the dead. The prodigal was dead according to the Scriptures. When his soul rose from the wallow of indulgence and came over the road of penitence to return his father's love and do his father's will, he became alive. When any man has that spirit, the issue of what lies beyond occasions no grave concern. Verily, the true resurrection begins here and now, in the very world in which we have our being. It is the soul becoming conscious of its destiny in the redeeming love of God in Christ. No longer do we fear death. It is forgotten in the great impulsion to righteousness that Christ brings to our hearts, in the sense of power that thrills us amid our problems and our labors. We know there is a great day sometime ahead whose dawning is in our souls today. And so we go about our human business, singing

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,
In this long war beneath the stars,
So shall a glory wreathe my head,
So shall I faint and show the scars,
Until this case, this clogging mould,
Be smithied all to kingly gold.

Out of the Depths

By Richard Henry Stafford

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above. Colossians 3:1.

UT of the depths on the first Easter came Jesus. On Friday he had been slain; he had gone down into the dark night of the tomb. On Sunday he greeted the morning light again, alive, and manifest in victory over death as the Eternal Lord of life and truth. How this happened, no man can say. That this happened, no man can doubt who honors historical evidence. The event, puzzling though it be, is as well attested as any fact in history, and would not be questioned by any critic of the records were it not for the unparalleled nature of the event. Scientific explanation is fundamentally a matter of classification with like phenomena; but this phenomenon cannot be classified, for its very purport attaches to the fact that it stands alone. So we cannot pretend to understand it. But it is hardly sane to deny it, solely on the inadequate ground that we cannot bring it within the usual categories of our comprehension.

The New-Born Church

Out of the depths on the first Easter came Jesus' disciples. When he was slain, they descended into the dark night of despair. When he arose, they came forth again into the light of a jubilant faith, trembling with joy, their souls triumphant over the last shadow of doubt that he whom they followed was God's anointed.

Out of the depths, with the faith of the disciples

born anew on the first Easter, came the new-born church of Christ. Through centuries and millennia it had been making, in the womb of time. Now that long gestation was over, and there issued into the world this organism, one body with many members, whereof the head is he who was crucified and is risen, ministering salvation to the souls of men and deliverance to human society. Easter is the birthday of the church. For the church began when the disciples, converted

Richard Henry Stafford

from dismay to a mood and purpose of conquest in his name by their wondrous encounters with the Master who had overmastered mortality, undertook to stand together and advance across the world as heralds of the good tidings of divine love, and life more abundant, in Christ Jesus.

Out of the depths on the first Easter came also a novel, exalted and assured hope for humanity. Men had probably always half-believed in a sort of half-immortality—a shadowy survival of an unsubstantiated wraith of personality, after the grim and awful destiny of death had been accomplished. But in all primitive myths of life beyond this world, the land of the departed had been a grey region of wistful dream, and doleful repining for the lost joys of the flesh. Nor had even Israel risen far above this gloomy idea, despite her ancient oracles of the Almighty and his everlasting mercy. But now there entered the hearts of men a conviction without precedent, based upon the fact of Christ's resurrection and the faith that he was the first-born among many brethren.

This conviction is called, in the earliest and simplest of Christian creeds which have come down to us, "the resurrection of the body." Though that phrase has been associated with many crude and untenable concepts in bygone stages of doctrinal development, its essential meaning is one which all Christians still accept; namely, that in the life to come we are not to be disembodied spirits, persisting aimlessly, but are to have a nature at least as complete as that which is ours on earth, with instruments of self-expression, and for the accomplishment of definite ends, at least as delicately organized and poised, as precise and as competent as our earthly bodies. We are to live yonder, not to dream only; and life means activity and growth. This hope of a total survival of personality, in other dimensions than the three we now know, but with continuity of direction and aim, justifies us, in spite of the incompleteness and unfairness of our earthly experiences, in holding that the universe is moral through and through —that the outcome of our life will some day, somewhere, be worthy of its source, which is God; and that what really counts, here as well as hereafter, is education—the progressive appreciation and realization of spiritual values—rather than any achievement in time, or accumulation of things while we abide on our present plane of existence. And such a view transforms the meaning of human life—transfigures it with a divine light.

The Source of Our Faith

Finally, out of the depths, at the first Easter, we came. We had never then been thought of, except by God in his foreknowledge; nevertheless, we were raised together with Christ. For the very environment which has rendered our life possible, and which affords us our indispensable sphere of action, is formed by and infused with the influences which were set at work in the world by our Lord's triumph over death; and the resultant emergence of the church and of the immortal hope. Moreover, all the ideals we profess, even though sometimes we honor them rather in the breach than in the observance, are drawn from Christ as their source. This would hold true, even if we were not, in personal commitments, Christians. For we are unmistakably products and members of a Christian tradition and society. But we who now worship here are Christians by our own choice as well as by heritage; we would not be here, if we were not. And our faith in the victorious Christ and his message to mankind determines our viewpoint in all the relations of life, at least in so far as we reflect upon these relations instead of acting in them on thoughtless impulse. All that we are and hope to be, we owe to the victory of the first Easter; if that victory had not been won, we should probably not have been born, or, if we had been born, we should be benighted and hopeless, instead of buoyant and enlightened as we are.

To these statements I am sure we will all agree. Yet on the main point of the Easter message some of us have come of late to entertain a good deal of uncertainty. That point is, of course, that, as Christ lives, so we shall live forever. Most of the time we would like to live forever. Sometimes, however, when we are tired and discouraged, it seems a dreary prospect, from

which we would gladly escape. But that is because we never get tired or discouraged except when we forget God and his goodness. Immortality without God and his goodness would undoubtedly be no boon at all, but a dreadful doom. It is, however, to an immortality under God's care, and in progressive enjoyment of his goodness, that Easter invites our hope. And that is for us all, and especially for the heavy-laden among us, a benefit so priceless and immeasurable that we can hardly contemplate it without swelling hearts and tears of gratitude and joy. Yet dare we believe? May there not be some mistake about our Lord's resurrection? And, quite apart from that, where is there a jot of proof to establish or support our dream of life to come? Can sensible people possibly believe without sensible evidence?

What Is the Evidence?

Of course we could not believe in this or any other tenet in the face of sensible evidence in disproof of it. But no one pretends that immortality can be disproved. The whole contention, on the part of opponents of the gospel whose objections sometimes trouble us, is simply another instance of the old fallacy of the argument from silence: God has not spoken in terms measurable by the laboratory, to tell us that we shall live hereafter; therefore presumably he has not spoken at all, and there is no future life. But you and I believe that we are now living, do we not? Yet have you ever tried to prove that you are living, instead of dreaming? Or that other people besides yourself are real, and not mere phantoms of your imagination? There is not a jot of evidence on these points, either. Yet no sane person doubts them. We acknowledge them by continuing to live, and assuming that life is real. And that acknowledgment is borne out to our entire satisfaction by the results we achieve through living. It is exactly the same with the matter of life's continuance forever. It is a truth given to our inner consciousness, not susceptible of proof. Of it we have to make a vital acknowledgment—that is, we have to take it for granted and act accordingly, though it surpasses our logic to justify that attitude in advance of taking it. It is abundantly justified, however, by the results accruing in our lives after making this vital acknowledgment.

And the form in which we are to make it is indicated by that great prophet of the resurrection, St. Paul, in the words of our text: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above." In other words, live in the expectation that you will never die, and let that expectation govern your conduct. Of course our present bodies will die; but what we believe is that our present bodies are of no greater account to ourselves than are our present houses. We shall move to other quarters, but we shall still live.

Taking Time to Live

We are, then, to give up our distracting and subversive habit of haste. We can take time to do our work well, to enjoy life as we go along, and to do the things we really want to do, but for which there is no leisure if we are to live only until we leave these bodies. Do you know what most people would like to do more than anything else, if only they had time? They would like to be kind. They would like to do something to make this a better world, for their fellow-men and for those who will live after them. Hardly anybody wants to be selfish. But a great many are made selfish by the notion that unless they get all they can for themselves today they will have lost their only opportunity. We can afford today the luxury of giving ourselves to generous effort, for the welfare and happiness of our brethren. To do so is a part of our vital acknowledgment of immortality.

Again, we waste a great deal of time and energy on our bodies, beyond what is necessary to keep them clean, strong and serviceable. We do so because we carelessly suppose that we are our bodies. Thus we become like housekeepers who spend their lives perpetually dusting and sweeping, in pursuit of an exorbitant ideal of perfect domestic order which renders them useless for all purposes beyond the home, and which is a source of annoyance rather than of comfort to everybody else in the home besides themselves—housekeepers who would rather hurt their children than mar their mahogany. But if our bodies are only good for what they can do at this moment in behalf of our spirits—if they are of no intrinsic importance—we can afford to stop worrying about food, health, housing, clothes, and jewels, and begin to make the most of our time in better ways, fully persuaded that the kernel is of more value than the shell, the inhabitant than the house, of our personality. And that puts a full stop to selfishness, which is always bound up more or less closely with a preoccupation with our physical interests.

The Casting Out of Fear

Finally, we can stop being afraid. There is not one of us who has not an instinctive horror of death. But that horror is just a suggestion surging up from our animal nature; it is not in itself of the character of genuine thought. Yet sometimes we allow the fear of death, and all the lesser fears associated with it or derived more or less directly from it, to preempt our minds, so that we spend all our days groping with shudders through shadows of morbid anxiety. It is pathetic to see how many people are perpetually afraid, haunted by an immediate apprehension that they are going to die, or of lesser deaths like bereavement, business failure and the like. But since we are going to live forever, there is nothing whatever to be afraid of. We are perfectly secure. Whatever happens, we shall go on; and today's distresses, even though this be the day of our body's dying, will be just a fading memory tomorrow, in the light of another day's sun. To stop being cowards, to begin to treat lightly our instincts of dread, and to defy misfortune, strong in the will to serve God and in the confidence of his support, is also one of the spontaneous and uplifting elements of a vital acknowledgment, going deeper than logical or scientific proof, that we, who in Christ have the promise of

life everlasting, are assured that this promise will be fulfilled.

Theologically, Easter is the authentication of Christ's claim to be the Son of God, blessed forever, and the Captain of mankind's salvation. Historically, it marks the birth of the Christian church, the greatest movement for human betterment which the world has seen. But its deepest meaning is personal, and must be appropriated and realized by each of us individually. We must make up our minds to live the risen life today—to seek the things that are above—to prefer moral and spiritual ends, the noble aim of wisdom and the strong and enduring growth of character, to all moods and purposes begotten of these natural bodies which must shortly disappear, to be replaced by the spiritual body. It is only as we do this, in high scorn of the low motives, which are restricted to earthly time as their sphere, that we enter into the heart of the meaning of this festival of the resurgent and invincible power of divine love. And, when we do so, our new way of living, in the inner felicity which it imparts, gives us all the evidence we need or want, that the hope which came to earth on the wings of the dawn of the first day of the week after our Lord's passion is no chimera of the distraught fancy, but is as strong, as substantial, as dependable as God himself.

The Moral Certainty of Immortality

By Alfred Wilson Swan

I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that at the last he shall stand upon the earth;
And after this body is destroyed,
Then without my flesh shall I see God.
Job 19:25, 26.

I

I KNOW! Easter is a celebration of the certainty of the Christian conviction about immortality. It is something more than a spring festival or flower show. The lily from the bulb is a symbol of that spiritual process by which from the harsh husk of this earth-stained life there emerges the spotless beauty and pure fragrance of the white life in God. There is no getting away from it that in the Christian church the resurrection of Jesus represents a belief in the supreme worth of personality. On this anniversary we reaffirm our conviction that not even death can destroy such as he and his. Yet there is a great lack of certainty about it both within and without the church. Upon this whole matter our ideas are more apt to be nebulous than clear. But inquisitiveness is no adequate attitude on the matter. It is not enough to say, I wonder!

One can be an ethical follower of Christ without believing in this tenet of faith. That is, he can propose to maintain an attitude of respect for other personalities socially, and stop at that. But surely it is illogical not to attribute to God as much consideration for us as we propose to show for one another. We cheat ourselves of the ultimate implication of our own regard for personality, if we do not postulate the same regard in God. Immortality thus morally conditioned and spiritually realized is an inescapable conclusion of our Christian conviction about the eternity of moral values. What happened to Jesus was not a miracle; it was a moral inevitability. If we are his, that same inevitability is in store for us.

As to immortality, therefore, we may stubbornly insist we know—not as we know a demonstrable fact, for no one knows anything about it on that level—but rather as we are convinced of and persuaded about things yet undemonstrable. We urge the point more ardently just because it is one in defense of the ultimate character of God. It is not incredible that this mortality should put on immortality.

II

It is true that there are many appearances against it. The disintegration of the body seems so succinctly to punctuate the end of life completely. More troubling still has been the discovery of the dependence of consciousness and reason and memory on the brain. It is difficult to conceive how personal identity will persist. These are, at first glance, apparently conclusive evidences against life beyond the grave.

But things are not always as they appear. Many things, some of them the most elemental in our experience, are absolutely contrary to appearances. The earth we live on certainly appears to be flat. No one ever saw its curvature. Only the constructive imagination has ever conceived it so. But appearances to the contrary, the earth is round, not flat. The sun to all appearances circles around the earth each day. Did you ever have a sense of motion as you stood and watched the sun march across the sky? Contrary to appearances, it is the earth and not the sun that moves. Up and down seem absolute distinctions. Yet we know that on the other side of the globe are folk whose feet point toward ours, and with whom our down is up. Contrary to appearances, down and up are relatives, not absolutes.

White paper and black coal seem absolute opposites; it seems incredible that both are chiefly carbon. But things are not always as they seem. In fact, almost everything in the physical world is contrary to superficial appearances. And man's progress in the exploration of the nature of the physical world has been in proportion to his willingness to believe the seemingly incredible. It is the genius of man to give nature no rest until he finds the ultimate truth. It is token of the divine discontent within him.

Says J. Arthur Thomson in "A System of Animate Nature," "Life is not so much a rebound from as a reply to environment"—which is a legitimate attack upon a behaviorism that infers that because a dog kicks when his foot is scratched, we walk because the gravel presses through our shoe soles. Life is a reply to the

facts. Faith often is an assertion in contradiction of the facts. It is a moral something in us that rises up and gives the lie to those blasphemies on the Eternal Love that say we have no hope. Faith is a conviction of things not seen, often a contradiction of the veriest appearances.

III

More than that, many things that have seemed too wonderful to be true have turned out to be true. That men would fly—what scoffers most men were of that presumption even so late as the turn of the present century! Why, man is heavier than air; how can you expect him to fly!—they sneered. But here is another of those incredibilities, which we are now all obliged to believe.

When Commander Byrd was down about the South Pole he talked every night with two radio stations in New York. One night both of them had him on the air; and one of the New York stations wanted to communicate with the other New York station, but could not get its attention. So what did station A do but tell Byrd to tell station B that station A wanted to talk to it. So the message was relayed half way round the world and back, that two stations a few miles apart might converse. If by some magic the shades of Washington and Jefferson or even Franklin could be paged, how entirely incredible such a performance would seem to them! Things so wonderful have occurred, and are occurring every day, that the one thing one dare not be today is incredulous.

Almost always the skeptics have been put to shame and the believers have been vindicated in the field of science. The believers have dared make assertions about things not yet seen. They asserted that there were rays of light beyond the violet. Impossible, said the skeptics. If there were anything beyond the violet in the spectrum, we would see it. But the experimenters went on, until they demonstrated the existence of ultra-violet rays—which have never yet been seen. And once more the believers were justified. The lack was not in the reality, but in the perceiving mechanism of the eye. The invisible does exist. It is all about us close, whether or not we see it.

Some time ago, before the British Association of Science, Ramsay the physicist began an address with these words: "The subject of my remarks today is a new gas. I shall describe to you later its peculiar properties, but it would be unfair not to put you at once into possession of the knowledge of its most remarkable property, which is that it has not yet been discovered!" What a parable of the thing we are laying our minds to at Easter time. If scientists may postulate a gas as a medium necessary to the explanation of phenomena, we may postulate a life beyond life to explain that which lies back of phenomena. The one is no more incredible than the other.

IV

No, a thing is not incredible simply because we have never experienced it before. He who shuts himself up to such a view, locks out much of life.

After all, childhood can imagine neither the depth of joy nor the abyss of sorrow of adult life. But that does not mean these do not exist. It means simply that childhood has no data of experience to make comparisons. Our trying to understand what another life is like is much as if a native Hawaiian who had never been off the Island of Oahu were trying over the telephone to tell an Eskimo who had never been south of Point Barrow what the mid-Pacific island was like when the telephone connections were bad and the Eskimo was deaf. We are trying to picture a plane of

Alfred Wilson Swan

existence whose data we get only by inference.

A grub worm in a pond once approached the amphibian frog and said, "Respected frog, may I ask you a question?" "Ask away," burgled the frog. "Well, what I want to know," said the water worm, "is, what's beyond this world?" "What world?" said the frog. "Why, the world of this pond we live in," said the grub. "If you think this pond is all there is, what do you call what is outside the pond," puffed the pompous frog. "That's what I want to know," said the worm meekly. "Well, if you must know, it's dry land," said the frog. "And what's that?" said the grub. "Can you swim there?" "Why, no, of course not, you poor, ignorant worm; there is no water there." "Well, if there is no water there, then what is there?" "Why, air, of course." "Air! What is that?" That puzzled even the frog, who said, "Well, it's the nearest thing to nothing that I know of." "I don't understand," said the grub. "That is to be expected," said the frog, and swam away. But one day the grub worm felt an irresistible urge to climb a lily stem and lie upon a lily pad, until the sun dried its skin; whereupon

t split open and stepped out a dragon fly with wings of gorgeous gauze. And buzzing above the old frog he said, "Now I understand." Some day we may hope to understand what is now in the nature of the case beyond our comprehension. If Nature has already worked the wonder of amphibiosis, who shall say a similar but higher transition may not be made by us in the future?

What an age it must have been when life climbed up out of the water onto the dry land! How the unbelievers must have said: It can't be done! Water is necessary to life. We die the moment we are out of it. And how the more adventurous and believing must have rejoiced when they found that gill-breathers could become lung-breathers, and that air, though more tenuous than water, could sustain a freer, nobler life than water ever could. We who are trying to push up and out into the spiritual world are doing something quite analogous to what our predecessors in the struggle for life have already done. Just because we have never been over there, we need not conclude that we are not going there. What seems now impossible may seem then so perfectly simple.

Or take another illustration of great transition. Imagine that in that period when we were of the yet unborn we had been gifted with the power of thought, and the skeptic in us had conversed with the believer in us. In those months we were living without light or air, both of which would have seemed incredible to us. Our life would have seemed utterly dependent on the conditions to which we were there affixed, detachment from which would have seemed certain death. So the skeptic in us could have said: "You see how necessary to our existence is our attachment to our present circumstance. How can you be so unscientific as to suppose that after this attachment shall be disrupted we shall remain alive? You are a wish thinker; you think you will go on living, simply because you desire to." And then the believer in us could reply: "My faith is not a wish fancy. There is a promise here already. Month after month Nature has been at work here making something so marvelous that something more than this existence is to come of me. Why these limbs, which have no use in these confining quarters, if I am not to walk and reach? Why these eyes and ears, if this dark silence is not to be followed by light and sound? Nature is no idiot; she does not consummate so promising a process without an end in view. That crisis, which you think will be the end of me, however fraught with pain it is, will be not an end but a new beginning; not death but birth, you see."

Such a crisis we have been through already. Who shall say that the wonders of existence have yet exhausted themselves in us! That we have not yet entered an experience does not make our future entering of it incredible at all.

V

Indeed, the most incredible thing would be that immortality were not true. Man is equipped for some-

Easter Morning Prayer

By Joseph Fort Newton

O GOD ETERNAL, who alone canst give the immortal life which Thou hast made us to seek and desire, we praise Thee for the prophecies of this festival of the Eternal Hope. Our hearts rejoice, albeit subdued by a tender wistfulness, as we gather to keep the historic feast of faith in the life that shall endless be. Thou hast set this heroic hope in our hearts to cheer us along our pilgrim way; make us worthy of its meanings, and by Thy grace keep our faltering spirits steadfast in its joy.

Here, O Lord, as subject to death, yet longing for life, Thou hast appointed that we should pass our days; here, having nothing securely, yet possessing all things in Thee. Lift the clouds from off our souls, we humbly pray; lead us out of the shadow of sense into the light of Thy presence. Make us to know Thy quickening power in our hearts, like the stir of life in the soft-spoken springtime, with its swelling buds and its singing birds; and may the revelations of this day be so rich a possession that we can never again be poor.

Lord, we praise Thee that Thou hast not kept this glory hidden in Thyself, but hast given us hints, glimpses and holy intimations of its wonder. Which of our hearts hast Thou not sometimes touched, so that we have made haste, and, running to Thee, have cast off our doubts, and rejoiced. But such visions were not enough to quiet our nameless fears, and Thou didst show us the eternal life in the midst of time, erect, unafraid, serene, triumphant, that we, with unveiled faces, might behold its grace and truth in a life like our own.

Make us, through Him who hast overcome death, possessors and inheritors of the eternal life while yet we walk in the shadows of time. Reveal Thyself in us, Thou Lord and Giver of Life; work in us more vividly by Thy purifying spirit, that some quality of Thy life may more clearly appear in us, transforming our fleeting and fragmentary days with its light and power and glory.

Our Father, all our faith and hope and love make request unto Thee for the abundant life that we need. Show us that we live with Thee, and in Thee, in whom live the spirits of those who walk with us no more; that death is but a cloud-shadow wandering across our human valley, and that our own will return to us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

thing more than this life. He who insists that death ends all must concede that nature has made a preposterous waste in furnishing the spirit of man with wings that long to fly, yet forbidding him to leave the ground.

If you should discover in the tanks of an airplane only a few gallons of gasoline, you would be justified in inferring that only some such hop as from Wichita to Kansas City was being contemplated. But if in the tanks you should find several hundred gallons, you would be justified in inferring that a Lindbergh was about to strike out for a distant continent. The equipment of the ship indicates a distant destination. No young animal sprouts wings except as a prophecy of flight, or fins unless it is destined to live in the water.

So with the equipment of the human spirit. "The outfit of the animal," said James Martineau, "seems an ideal provision for the purely terrestrial sphere in which it is placed, while the outfit of man, if the terrestrial sphere be all that is appointed for him, seems clearly a vast over-provision." If this life be all, why have we been endowed with spiritual aspirations at all? If ever the torments of Tantalus were on anything, they are on us, if we have been given the power to desire eternal life, and are forever to find it just beyond our reach. That would look like intentional cruelty. And even the most ardent mechanist cannot say that Nature is intentionally cruel. It is incredible that we can reason so, if there be no reason in the universe. The most unbelievable of all things would be that moral aspiration could have arisen in a non-moral universe; that you and I can love in a world where love does not exist. It were more credible that Fords might have colts than that personality can have come out of mechanism alone! That would require the most credulity of all.

Without immortality nothing is intelligible; with immortality everything is. As George Herbert Palmer said of his wife Alice Freeman Palmer: "Who can contemplate the fact of her death and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit?"

VI

No, the only credible thing to believe is that God has made us for some higher ends. Said Charles Darwin: "With respect to immortality, nothing shows me so clearly how strong and almost instinctive a belief it is as the consideration of the view now held by most physicists, namely, that the sun with all the planets will in time grow too cold for life. Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress."

Luther Burbank was cautious in the extreme, yet he said: "Up to now we are what we are because of our heredities and our environments. But this is not the end. It may be only the beginning. I do not know what the end will be; no man knows anything that is final. Wait awhile!"

In contrast with these thoughts of the really great minds, how puny seem the bold denials with which the fatalist asserts the finality of death. It is strange indeed how in a world where now everything else is spoken of as relative, one who dies should be called with such assurance absolutely dead. Agnosticism, for all its honest caution—and it has contributed healthy elements to the rise of modern religious ideas—yet finally commits logical suicide. If we cannot know, how can we know that we cannot know? If we are not certain of anything, how can we be so certain that dead is really dead? We need to doubt our doubts awhile. In a world where theoretical certainty is impossible—if it is—the only sane course is to follow the greater probability and to reject interpretations of life that do not make sense in favor of one that does.

Sometimes religion is accused of being an attempt to escape reality, and belief in immortality with being a dodging of the facts. But, in fact, religion is the only thing that really grapples with reality. The real evader of reality is he who narcotizes his perceptions with sensuality, until he is insensible to the spiritual world about him. The real ostrich with his head in the sand is the man who buries his life in the immediate, and refuses to look at the horizons about him. To be agnostic is to think to meet the situation by pulling the blankets over one's head and shutting the reality out. But life will not be so ignored. To attempt to ignore life is ultimately to be ignorant.

To hide one's head, to close one's mind, is always disastrously to miss the facts—often the important and encouraging ones. Above all, it is a partial view to exclude the fact of Jesus. Jesus was a fact, a human, historic fact. Now the universe that scraps a Jesus is insane. But an insane universe could not have made even you and me—much less the wonder of the like of him. If the Father withheld not him, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things! If, then, he be raised up, how shall not we also in like manner be raised with him!

This is the Christian conviction, which so far from being incredible is so much the only credible conviction that it is inescapable.

VII

The other day the French field marshal, the great Foch, passed on. And by coincidence, or inevitability, his last word was the battle cry of the French army—"Allons!" Onward! Let us be going! Or as the Yanks would have had it, Let's go! What a cry to greet the time of our departure with! And yet, what a natural one! After the struggles of this life it should be most natural to cry with Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the angel, "Let me go, for the day breaketh!"

Only, one will be able to say that with more enthusiasm and confidence and peace, if he holds also the Christian conviction of St. Paul at Easter time: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

The Message of the Cross to Indifference

By William Pierson Merrill

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Lamentations 1:12.

IS IT nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" That cry came first from a devoted servant of God, who faced a world that was wrong, and felt that men did not care. There lay the Holy City of God in ruins. The temple was destroyed, the people of God in exile; and men and women seemed to go about their business as if nothing had happened. Out of the heart of the man of God, to whom all this had made a tragic difference, broke this passionate protest against indifference. How could they be so careless in the presence of such facts? "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"

It takes no special keenness of insight to see that things are wrong today, and that one of the most stubborn obstacles in the way that leads to a better world many of us do not know, or do not greatly care, that is the dull and heavy weight of indifference. So things are wrong.

Talk with earnest people in any one of the major realms of social life, and they will very soon be telling you how faulty the structure of our social order is; industry, government, education, religion, none of them is right.

I know the quick protest that will rise to many lips —that we are living in days that abound in restless spirits and wild words; that we must not expect immediate and startling changes; that progress comes best when it comes in orderly and slow fashion. All true; but grant it all, go to an extreme in allowing for the slow gathering of normal forces, and the like; and still you know in your heart, as I know in mine, that there is a very large field of human life where things would quickly be different, if you and I, and people like us, were not so indifferent.

Two letters lay together in my mail the other day. One told of a business venture, catering to the amusement of the wealthy, that cleared one hundred per cent profit in a few months; the other told of thousands of children in desperate straits unless the Near East relief could get more money. Is a world right in which two such conditions can exist side by side?

Injustice and Poverty

There are evils now keeping the life of the people at low ebb, which would be changed in a few days, if all of us simply did what we might do to know the facts and to grapple with them. Not long ago I listened to statistics as to the number and kind of tenements in New York City that are expressly condemned by public standards adopted some thirty years ago. And the speaker remarked that if these tenements went on being replaced by decent dwelling places at the rate of progress that has held during the thirty years or so since such buildings were condemned, it would take over two hundred years to rid our city of them all. Do you suppose for a moment that if you and I made an exhaustive tour of such tenement districts, and came to know the facts, we could ever be content to do nothing about it? Those conditions would haunt our souls until we did something.

There is a general realization that lawlessness is a serious problem in this country. The outstanding phase of it is in connection with the prohibition law, but it has many other phases. When the President makes it the center of his inaugural we pay attention. But the President put his finger on the pulse of the situation when he traced the trouble back to the indifference of the ordinary citizen. These are but instances. One could go on and give dozens of them. Things are not right in our world, and the chief reason why they continue to be wrong is the indifference of the mass of people, who will not take the trouble to know, or to act on what they know.

We are meeting here as a part of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is all well in the religious world? Is the church the strong and powerful instrument of God it ought to be? Is the gospel of the kingdom being preached as Jesus meant that it should be? Is our mission work abroad and at home being pushed with a vigor worthy of the name of Christian? Is the place of religion in our scheme of education satisfactory? Things are not all as they should be in the church, and in the general sphere of religion. We know that. What are we doing about it? Is it not true beyond controversy that the main trouble lies in the indifference of those who profess to be Christians?

Ourselves and Christ

Again I hear the protests and pleas which we so readily offer. Life is so full of interests and cares and responsibilities. There is so much to be done and cared for and enjoyed and endured. We cannot attend to everything; what can we do, except give what little we can here and there of time and strength and means, and wish we might give more? Well, no one of us has the right to judge another; but each of us has the *duty* of judging himself. And what we are doing now is to place ourselves, not in comparison with other people, but in comparison with Christ our Lord. What would he do?

Let us first see very clearly what he said about this matter of indifference. We are not even beginning to know the teaching of the gospel if we do not see that to the mind of Jesus slackness or indifference was one of the worst of sins. When Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "the only sins worth thinking about are sins of omission," he came very near to the judgment of Jesus. Here is a deeply significant fact; whenever our Lord spoke of judgment, of hell, of eternal loss, it was invariably with regard to some sin of slackness or omission. To his view, the worst sin was the sin of doing nothing. One picture of a man in hell—what had he

done? Looked at the beggar at his gate and done nothing. One parable of a wicked and slothful servant —what had he done with his talent? Nothing. One picture of people shut out from heaven—what had they done? Neglected to get oil. One picture of the final judgment, where some are sent away into darkness forever! What have they done? "In as much as ye did it *not*," that is the sentence. Who can think or speak lightly of the sin of indifference in the light of such teaching?

Even more impressive is the example of Jesus, with its climax on Calvary. The world of his day was wrong. What did he do? He sought no sheltered nooks. He pulled down no shades as he passed through. He faced the facts. He felt the responsibility.

What Jesus Did

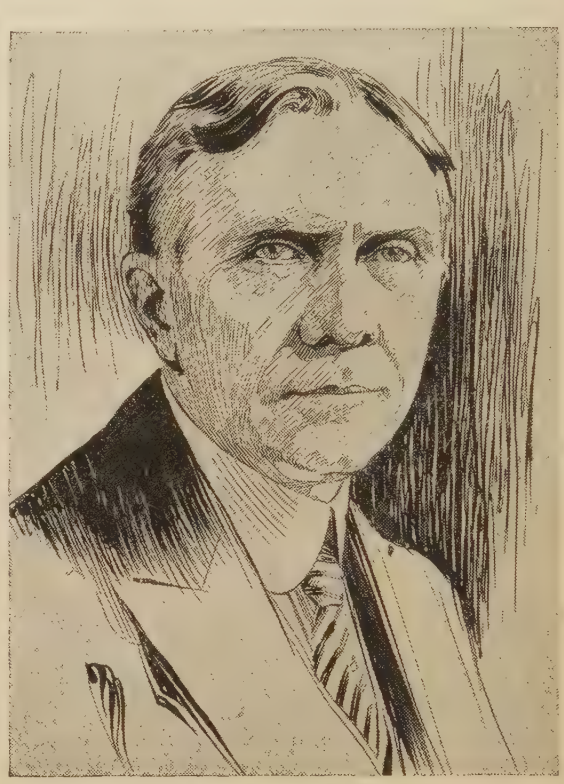
Things were wrong in religion. Worship was perfunctory and traditional; religion was something left over from the past. What did he do? Stay home from church, lose interest, drop away? Is not that just what he would have done had he been like many of us? You know what he did. He went in and cleansed the temple, did what he could, and took the consequences. Men were praying perfunctorily; he gave them a new prayer, which we still use as better than all others. The church of his day was dominated by cold-blooded and hypocritical ecclesiastics. Did he wash his hands of the whole institution, and go off to worship God in nature? Paul states no more than the sober fact when he says that "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or blemish or any such thing." Is that how we are meeting the current criticisms of religious institutions, many of them absolutely just? We rejoice in the dying down of the baleful fires of theological controversy that flared up so alarmingly a few years ago. But if we have passed out of controversy only into complacency, the change is not all gain. Indifferentism may be worse than fanaticism.

We stand at Calvary, we see about us evil faces, figures in the tragedy that we unsparingly condemn. Which of all responsible for the killing of Jesus has the common sense of the Christian church selected as most worthy of being eternally pilloried in its creed? Not Caiaphas, the determined enemy; not Judas, the traitor; but Pilate, the man who knew what he ought to do, and did nothing; the man who washed his hands, and tried to evade responsibility. "This is not my affair," he said; and ever since, Christians have repeated the words, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." The man we blame most is the man who could not make up his mind.

Rejecting Christ

Jesus saw the world was wrong; and he cared; cared enough to give his life. We see that the world is wrong—or we would if we would let up the blinds and look at the facts. Do we care? What are we doing about it?

Most serious of all is our indifference to Christ himself. He passes by, and we do not see. He knocks, and we do not hear. He calls, and we do not respond. We are so busy about all sorts of things. He works away at his eternal task of making man's life better, purer, happier, more godly; and we let him work alone, or think we do him a favor if we help now and then. Of all the striking religious paintings, none is more true to actual conditions than Sigmund Goetze's "Despised and Rejected." An altar in a market place; Christ stripped, bruised, bound to the altar; all our modern life flowing past; business men and politicians hurrying to their tasks; a mother busy with her babe; men intent on the racing news; youths eager after



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pleasure; ministers debating theological questions; not one of them with a thought for the figure bound to the altar, on which is the inscription—still too true—"to an unknown God"; and overhead the angel of the garden, holding aloft the cup of sorrow which Christ must still drink. How can we look on that scene without contrition?

> But after nineteen hundred years the shame
> Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
> That outraged faith has entered in his name.
> Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
> Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord, how long
> Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!

How much do we care about Christ and his cause? Measured against his unstinted sacrifice, how do we look, our gifts, our services, our sacrifices, our lives? What right have we to "bear the name of Christian"? Indifference is still, as it was in the days of his flesh, the serious and shameful sin. We have grown less cruel, more soft, since that day, thanks to his influence.

We do not crucify people now. We would not crucify him. But what would we do with him? Is Studdert-Kennedy all wrong in his answer:

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged him on a tree,
They drave great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep;
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed him by;
They never hurt a hair of him, they only let him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain;
They only just passed down the street, and left him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do;"
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

Would not our indifference hurt him as much as the nails did?

It would be strange, indeed, if in the souls of some of you there were not forming a silent protest against what I am saying. Why speak in this way to us, you ask? Say what one will of present day indifference to religion, to human welfare, to the church, to Christ, why bring such a message to people who do care enough to come to church, to give largely and generously to the support of the church, and to respond liberally to all good causes? Is it fair to lay on us the burden of this sin of indifference? My friends, this is a hard sermon to preach. The preacher cannot judge others without condemning himself. I know the deep concern in many a heart in this congregation for the cause of Christ and the good of man. I know how utterly impossible it is for you to give attention to all that cries for it. One of you recently, in a moment of confidence, showed me his morning's mail, countless appeals, at least a dozen of them worthy and genuine. "What more can we do?" you ask, "How can we feel deeply and respond freely, in all this multitude of needs?" God forbid that any conscientious soul should be burdened with the weight of what that soul cannot do! It would indeed be intolerable if I were judging you. But so far as what I am saying is true at all, it is not something I am saying to you; it is something Christ is saying to us. He is a generous and loving judge; but he judges justly. We dare not keep away from the searching light of his cross. And we dare not hide from ourselves what that light reveals.

Indifference

If there are here any lives so Christlike, so extreme in their readiness to give and serve, so untainted with the vice of indifference, that they can stand untroubled and glad in the presence of the cross of Christ, let them be free and happy, and let us all be glad for them. But I know that those who come nearest to meeting such conditions will be the first to take to heart this solemn rebuke of the cross to our indifference. For they will enter into the spirit of the Master, who, though sinless, bore the general burden of the sin of the world. There is indifference in the world. There are wrong conditions, unjust conditions, oppressive conditions, which linger on and do their cruel work because men are indifferent to them, and will not rise and face them and master them and have done with them. Can we escape the general responsibility for a social and religious order that lets such things continue? Not if the spirit that sent Jesus to the cross, to bear sins of which he was guiltless, is in us.

And deep within our hearts we know that this is true; if we were the Christians we know we ought to be, things would not be as they are. Perhaps men in general would not be so *indifferent* if *we* were *different*. This is the eternally living message of Calvary to us—Once there was a man who so grappled with evil, so served God and man, so gave his life, that no one can come near him and remain indifferent to the fact of evil and the glory of sacrifice to overcome it. We cannot escape the test of setting our lives beside his.

Bolshevists at Least in Earnest

Some time ago I listened as a thoughtful man, just returned from Russia, told of conditions there. With unsparing truthfulness he exposed the folly and cruelty of much that is being done there by the soviet government. It was a terrible arraignment; and I am sure that others fell, as I did, into a somewhat unctuous temper of self-gratulation that we were not as they. But then he punctured our pride, as suddenly he turned and began to tell us of how those bolshevists, wrong as they are, believe and suffer and toil for their faith; how the best credential one can display in Russia today is a prison record on account of political opinions; how their very lives go into the cause. And the conscience of every man there must have been deeply moved as the speaker said, "I tell you, if we Christians believed in the kingdom of Christ as those men believe in the rule of the proletariat; if we put into the cause of Christ one-half what those men put into the cause of communism, there would be no bolshevist menace, and the kingdom of God would come."

If we believe what we profess, we have, in our Christ and in his religion, the one lasting hope of mankind, the secret of salvation, the key to progress, the one way to the good of man and the glory of God. What are we doing about it? Face that question in the solemn, searching light of the cross.

The good Lord Christ died on a hill,
In his blood, that bitter day.
But we, we crucify him still
In our indifferent way.
O citizens of all the world,
Kneel down, and let us pray.

The Homeless Universe

By Lynn Harold Hough

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46.

THE cross is shrouded in darkness. And on the cross hangs a lonely sufferer who can find no light within to relieve the darkness which settles all about him. He has always carried a light within. His personality has been incandescent with the inner light. That light was the consciousness of the presence of God. And that light has gone out. In his hour of deepest need the Great Sufferer cannot find his heavenly father. "My God, my God," he cries aloud, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

I

The sense of loneliness is a very bitter experience. It must be admitted also that it is a very common experience. Men reach out and find their hands returning empty. They cannot find their fellow men. They reach out and no right hand touches theirs in the darkness. They cannot find God. This isolation breaks down personalities and depletes the energies of strong men and women. It may in the beginning seem a rather ordinary, though admittedly an unpleasant, experience. But as the walls of one's prison house rise higher and the immutable destiny of loneliness makes its quality manifest, the true meaning of it all is revealed. For this sort of loneliness is spiritual death.

The barriers of circumstance are baffling. But they may be transcended. For Benjamin Disraeli was more right than he knew when he said, "Men are not creatures of circumstances; circumstances are creatures of men." Often circumstances can be mastered. And then the very acceptance of untoward circumstances may rob it of the power to wound. The barriers which men build against our approach are vastly disturbing and painful. But they do not touch the quality of our own lives. In spite of them we may win a subtle spiritual victory. For though men have shut us out, we may shut them in, as Markham's well known quatrain reminds us. But the walls of selfishness and hardness and sordidness which we build around our own lives do have a permanent menace to our peace, to our growth, indeed, to any possible fruitfulness for our lives. At the very bottom of hell Dante found Lucifer frozen in a great mass of ice.

The ultimate tragedy of this selfish isolation is the disintegration of personality itself. For only through the noble outreach of our personality for fellowship does our own life find and keep individual meaning and harmony. The selfish man comes at last to the place where there is no real self. There is only the perpetual clash of contradictory desires within and the loss of fruitful fellowship with life without. So loneliness becomes at last the disintegration of the individual spirit in a mass of corrosive and mutually defiant desires. Hell is the experience of being left alone with a disintegrating self.

II

All of this is terrible enough. But it is very difficult to associate it with the experience of Jesus. He was always master of bitter and antagonistic circumstances. No fact ever stood between him and his moral ideal. And no barrier men erected defeated his purpose of good will. He gave back kindness for suspicion, integrity for duplicity, love for hate. He made men's hostility the occasion for moral and spiritual victory. Temptation was to him always an opportunity to refuse to sin. Men might break his heart: they could never break his purpose. No foe ever forced his way into the inner citadel of his good will.

Because of all this we are accustomed to think of the inner life of Jesus as a kind of ineffable spiritual sanctuary to which we can retreat from the devastating strain of life. Here is a quiet untouched by life's storms. Here is the peace which passeth all understanding.

And yet the tale of the cross brings us suddenly upon an inner tragedy when the light goes out in the heart of Jesus. It brings us to an hour when he reached out for his father and could not find him. In the most abysmal agony of the cross we hear him cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

III

One feels an inevitable awe and hesitation in attempting to come to some genuine understanding of those piercing words of Jesus upon the cross. One has a feeling of invading a sacred realm of privacy which ought to be shut forever from prying eyes. And the feeling is quite sound and right minded. Yet there is more to be said. This is indeed a region to which we can claim no right of entrance. But it is also a region we may be allowed to enter. And one of the most astonishing things about the deepest experiences of Jesus is that, with all his sensitive qualities of feeling, he was always ready to sacrifice privacy for the sake of doing a thing which needed to be done for men. He never allowed even a noble reserve to stand between him and a destitute and wounded human spirit. He exposed his hours of supremest suffering to the eyes of men with a sad, high gallantry and moral expectation. And so we may enter that path of pain upon which he walked on the way to the cross, and we may follow to strange depths in his hours of passionate suffering upon Calvary.

There is perhaps no more subtle spiritual experience than that of the moral sympathy which takes upon itself the bitter pain of the unworthy. "Since you and I have done this thing," says the noble wife to the weak husband in a powerful story, "we must meet its consequences together." The husband stands aghast. "But you haven't done it," he says, "God knows you

couldn't have done it." The wife looks at him in a strange and brooding silence. "Have you lived with me all these years," she says, "without ever learning that I love you so much that your deed is my deed, too? No, I repeat, since you and I have done this thing we will meet its consequences together." Something seems to break within the personality of the husband and it is the beginning of his regeneration.

This power of innocence to make its own the moral dilemma of guilt is not a matter of commercial exchange. It is not a matter of cold and rigid dogma.

Lynn Harold Hough

It is one of the profoundest of psychological experiences. Love can bridge chasms which logic cannot cross. Devotion can enter into experiences which cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas. And the profoundest power of the Great Sufferer upon the cross as he touches the lives of men is just that by a strange and glorious act of moral and spiritual sympathy he did make the lot of the unworthy his own. He did stand on their side of the chasm and so in the darkest hour of his suffering he experienced the very quality of that moral destitution which comes from choosing selfish and evil thoughts and ways, and the spiritual isolation which that choice produces. His own stainless life entered a realm without light, experienced the very nature of that moral and spiritual loneliness which shuts the spirit off from fellowship with men and from fellowship with God. He made himself one with that bitter and lonely spirit which has become incapable of fellowship. And by the very miracle of this moral sympathy he made a door of hope for a spirit walled up in its own sterile and unchanging egotism.

When Thomas Mott Osborne was living like a convict at Auburn, an old timer, hard and irresponsive, saw him in the prison garb going about the unlovely tasks of the man feeling the hand of society hard upon him, and the grim old criminal melted into tears and suddenly saw a new vision of life. If you can break into the lonely isolation of a criminal you can teach him how to return with you to the fellowship of citizens of good will.

Moral evil carries men into a homeless universe. To them all the lights of home come to seem a bitter and ghastly illusion. The brighter the lights the more ugly the illusion. It is only the strange and heartbroken adventurer who finds his way into their homeless universe who can make it possible for them to believe in the lights of home. Only a heart in which the light has gone out in an hour of sympathetic suffering can kindle the tapers in darkened lives. There has been one such adventurer. He cried, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" He also cried, "Father, forgive them."

IV

It is the very nature of moral evil to make fellowship impossible. It disrupts the very fellowships which it seems to promise. The whole history of the moral life of mankind hinges here. All sins turn out at last to be treating persons as if they were things. And the moment you treat a person as if he were a thing, you make fellowship impossible. All dishonesty, all slander, all cruelty, all vice, all oppression, and the dark and devastating evils which blight mankind turn out to be sins against fellowship. Any gratification which makes permanent and nobly fruitful fellowship impossible has moral poison in it. For productive fellowship is the goal of human life and the nature of the divine life. Any freedom which is won at the sacrifice of the capacity for fellowship is really a subtle form of slavery. What we call emancipation is only an exchange of one set of chains for another, unless it leaves us with a new security in respect of capacity for fellowship with men and fellowship with God.

So it came about that in tasting the very quality of that moral isolation which makes fellowship impossible, Jesus entered into the meaning of the moral dilemma of men through a sympathy whose potency was as great as the amazing act of moral and spiritual understanding involved in the experience. All sorts of dark New Testament sentences (easily interpreted so that they are barbarous enough) leap into new significance when seen in the light of this deep and tragic experience in sympathy on the part of Jesus: "He who knew no sin became sin for us." The very word penalty can be used without searing one's conscience in this connection. For the penalty of moral evil is spiritual isolation. And Jesus did in truth enter the dark realm of spiritual isolation in order that he might rescue the dwellers in that sad land.

The words which describe such an experience almost court misunderstanding. But beyond the verbal infelicity lies a realm of spiritual reality it is all too easy for bright and superficial optimists to miss. The books of certain splendid and eager interpreters of religion

were being discussed by a young Russian. He admitted their bright and friendly quality. But he insisted that there were depths of passion and tragedy which they left untouched. It is safe to say that the lonely sufferer who cried "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" went so far into the heart of life's tragic pain and lonely isolation that no broken human spirit can say "I have gone farther. He cannot find me here."

V

You can trust the voice which once uttered that terrible cry. There is no danger that you are being deceived by a friendly spirit who has never touched the depths of life when he speaks. In your darkest hour in the homeless universe he is by your side. He has tasted the meaning of that hard and terrible isolation which separates men from men, social group from social group, and nation from nation, and the human family from the love of God.

And then—covering the whole distance from isolation to fellowship in his own experience—he dies with the words upon his lips: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And singularly enough—only he can save that word "father" from travesty in a world like ours. If he had not cried, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" there would have been a too facile optimism about the assurance of the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As it is, we dare to believe that the universe is not homeless, after all. For only one figure in history has actually made optimism morally authentic.

Immortality

By James A. Richards

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father? Luke 11:13.

THE Christian year is a useful institution, but, like many other good things, it also has its perils. The recurring festivals insure that at least once in a twelvemonth certain of the greater aspects of our faith shall be called to our attention and in some measure to the attention of the world. This is clear gain. But there may be also some loss if we assume that for the rest of the year these aspects of our faith may be neglected.

It is well that once a year Christmas leads us to meditate on the coming of the Christ-child and to try to catch some of the meanings of divinity's invasion of our humanity. It is not so well if for the rest of the year we are careless of these things. It is invaluable that at Easter we are made to thrill to the victory of Christ and are lured to gaze down the vistas of immortality. It is tragic that for so much of the rest of the time we live as brief children of the hour. Indeed, the more one thinks about it the more one wonders whether it is ever possible really to celebrate Easter at all if one has not been keeping it all the months before; whether of all feasts this is not the least separable from the rest of life.

It is suggestive that most great teachers of religion do not begin with immortality. Jesus did not begin with it. The great passages in which he treated of it seem to have come near the close of his teaching. Most great religious books that have chapters on immortality put those chapters at the end or close to it. Nor is this order followed merely because immortality comes at the conclusion of our personal histories. There is a deeper reason. A clear conviction of immortality must be based on other things that need discussion first.

Of course, there are some who would reverse this order. There are some who seem to have neat little proofs of immortality. None should quarrel with them. The conviction is so precious that we ought to rejoice in any path that can lead true men to it. But for most moderns immortality is not proved as other things are proved. It is not subject to experiment as are many of the truths of art and of religion. Experience can talk to us of the value of prayer and the power of Jesus to transform a man's inner life more directly than it can speak of immortality, for we cannot have the same kind of experience of that. Even psychical research has satisfied but few as it has satisfied Sir Oliver Lodge. To most moderns the conviction of immortality comes not as a present and immediate experience of reality. It grows inevitably out of other great realities. It comes as an attainment at the end rather than as a fact given at the start. It is not like the stirrup-cup, but rather like the goal at the end of a long, hard ride.

But if I personally cannot go with those who have neat little proofs of immortality, neither can I go with those who are indifferent toward it or smile at it as trivial. I wonder where their minds and hearts have been. Honor must go to those who, denying themselves faith in immortality or despairing of attaining any such faith, yet set themselves to live just as nobly without it. Sometimes they substitute an immortality of influence for a personal immortality. They say that they will live for the future of the race. Let me repeat that I honor and revere them. But I am not satisfied. There is no immortality of influence. There is none because there is no immortal future of the race. It is majestic and noble to live for the future generations instead of for one's self. I wish I could lift all men at least as high as this spiritual level. But science even now is holding a stop watch on the race. The continuance of humanity upon this planet has been discovered to depend on so many and such delicate factors, a slight disturbance of any one of which would ring down the curtain on the human story, that honesty requires us to regard the race as on a certain march toward the grave. Then, when the last of the children of men lays him down to die, what is left? Where then is the meaning of all the tears and laughter, the generosity and sacrifice and influence, of the story of

humankind? Unless they register outside humanity as we know it here, they are all gone. They are all defeated when humanity goes out into the gloom and is no more. Humanity is a better bank than I am. But that bank, too, has failed. I am not satisfied.

I

Sometimes these great souls who set themselves to live well without the immortal hope remind us that

JAMES A. RICHARDS

God is always left. They say that, just as Eskimo dogs carrying food or vaccine to some snowbound Alaskan village, or horses carrying the goods of men through the city streets, are creating values and serving ends in which they can have no understanding and no part and that are real only to a higher order of beings—that is, to us humans—so we humans who play our part well are creating values and serving ends which we cannot understand and in which we can have no lasting part but which are none the less real to a higher order of being—that is, to God. Once again, there is an austere nobility in such a position. But the trouble is that we are not dogs. We are not even Arabian horses. There is no suicide among dogs or horses. We are impelled to ask questions that we never detect in them. We look before and after. They do not. We are conscious of ourselves as capable of an infinite destiny. They are not. A different kind of hunger and a different kind of necessity are laid on us. We can't turn back and become as they are. The mind leaves us unsatisfied and defeated still.

But if I wonder where have been the minds of those who are indifferent to immortality and who smile at it as trivial, even more do I wonder where their hearts have been. Most of us have our graves. Others expect to stand beside them. Moreover, although the graves that are most mine are far away beside a brown church on a New England hillside sloping to the west across the Shawsheen and the Merrimac valleys, I never go long without standing beside a grave that belongs to my friends and feeling their sorrow overshadow me. It is from beside such graves that a minister hears the cry, "Talk on Immortality." If I cannot join those who have simple little proofs for immortality, neither can I range myself with those who are indifferent toward it or smile at it as trivial.

II

Personally I have found some help in discovering that no one can disprove immortality. That no physicist or chemist has discovered it, that no telescope or microscope has seen it, means precisely nothing. Neither have they discovered love, yet love is the surest reality there is. Neither have they seen life in itself. They see only its manifestations. Immortality, like a host of other things, is simply outside their field. They have no more jurisdiction in the argument against it than they have in the argument for it. Its wonder is no argument against it. To live again will be no whit more wonderful than that we are living now. Its mystery is no argument against it. It will be not one whit more mysterious to live there than is your present life here. Difficulty in conceiving it is no argument against it. I think Dr. Fosdick's choice little book on "The Assurance of Immortality" was the first to put this most pointedly to me. If you could consult an unborn child, would it not report that the approaching pain and transformation of birth appear to it as the blackest death? What picture can it have of all that is before it? For it to conceive what is before it is utterly impossible. Yet what looks to it like the end of all things is in reality a new start to a larger life. Nobody can prove that this other step which we call death, which looks so like an end, beyond which imagination reaches with so much difficulty, is not in reality a birth into a larger life. There is no argument against immortality.

III

But although this helps, it is a negative sort of help. Although it balances the scales, and that is helpful, what is there to tip the scales the other way? That question brings us to some of the antecedent realities. There is the key. It is what you take to be reality that brings you face to face with the parting of the ways. You may limit reality to what you call the material, to things that you can already weigh and measure and figure about. Then the game is up in the first inning. You had better go home and call the whole thing off. And don't ask for a rain check. There isn't any. Some people seem to choose to regard nothing as real that they cannot already weigh and measure and figure about. Such must not expect to be glorified by the immortal vista. Because there are so many things that we can weigh and measure and figure about and be-

cause to weigh and measure and figure about them helps to a vast improvement in human life, many slip almost unconsciously into assuming that nothing that cannot be so treated is real at all. It is not because science has one word to say in disproof of immortality but because science gets people into this mood that so many in this scientific age find their faith in immortality evaporating.

But most of us do not go so far as that. Most of us do not go even so far as we think we do. Here is a great picture. Let us say it is the Angelus, for instance. What is it? You answer, "Measure it, weigh it, figure about it, put it in the test tube, take it to the laboratory and there study it in every way. Then you'll know its reality." O no, you won't! You will get truth of a sort, but the full reality of the picture is of an utterly different kind. Here is a book. It is Dante's "Divine Comedy," or Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," or Browning's poems or Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese." The completest, most truthful material account of that volume will not give you the reality of the book. Here is a song. It is the "Marseillaise," sung in the streets of Paris. It is "Holy Night," sung by children in their nightclothes about your flaming hearth on Christmas eve. It is "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," sung by some ecstatic soloist in a crowded church on Easter morning. Measure the lengths of the air wave pulsations. Count their frequencies. Weigh their pressure against your ear drums. Then you will have the reality of the song. Will you? Here—or there—is a person. It may be that one you mourn today and every day, the one whose memory on Easter morning will fill your heart and eyes. What is that reality? To ask the question is at least to answer that it is far, far more than anything you can weigh or measure or figure about. You know more than the material, more than all the material can teach. Right now you are living in the presence of something vastly more than the material and you are living, if you are more than half alive, by something vastly more. And this more than the material is real. It is more real than the material. Offer all the gold in the world to some parent in return for the happiness of his little child!

IV

You can know more—it sounds strange but I am sure it is the nub of the whole matter—you can know more than you can prove in any tight little meaning of that word. Studdert Kennedy has somewhere written that you cannot prove that grass is green or lemons yellow. But you can know it. You cannot prove that your wife is the dearest woman in the world. You can know it. You cannot prove that the Symphony Orchestra is superior to a jazz band. You can know it. You cannot prove a sunset beautiful. You can know that it is. So always in these non-material ranges of reality proof is giving place to something even better. It is giving place to knowledge. Nor does that make confidence in immortality a mere emotional sentimentality unless to say that your wife is more than animal, that the symphony is superior to the band, that the sunset is beautiful, is mere emotional sentimentality. The one is as real as the other.

V

Now when we come into this superior region of reality—and please keep tight hold of that word *reality*—we are in a region that everywhere overflows our mortality, and especially if we be Christians. We have purposes. Nothing is more real than they. They are forever fashioning and commanding matter, but they are far too large for it. Especially is this so if we be Christians. We have real purposes to know, to attain, to serve, to love, that are far too big for this decaying material temple. They overflow mortality.

Above all, in this transcendent, non-material region of reality, there is God. Is there anything more real than the distinctions between truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, good and evil? We may and we do often dishonor these distinctions, but we know they are there and that we must come to terms with them at last. And the ground of these real distinctions is God—as real as they are. The awareness of all this is heightened for us if we live in the Christian purpose, for the Christian program, in the Christian task, progressively attaining the Christian ideal, progressively identifying ourselves with Christian love. Then it is that the scale not only tips—it stands on end. The scene of our questioning, if we question still, passes from ourselves and all the world about us right up to God. Nothing will so influence our confidence in immortality as the degree of our awareness of the God that Jesus taught and certified. Now the question is not so much what will content us as what will content him, the ultimate reality!

VI

If it would be incompatible with your self-respect to allow the human drama to end in night, can it be compatible with God's self-respect to allow a thing like that? As you would be ashamed to consign a growing boy to play only with a baby's toys, must we not follow Streeter in his picture of the individual life as a growing musician with the body as his first violin—good enough to learn to play on but to be replaced by something better later on? As the character of an employer and all his business is at stake in the way he regards and treats his men—just as property to be used, worn out, bent and thrown away, or as human, human as himself with all a human's hopes and aspirations—so the character of God and of all his universe is at stake in this question of immortality. Can we doubt the answer? If a friend respects his friend and tries to fulfill all the deepest longing of his friend, is it likely that God will do otherwise? If a frail human parent will not only not consent to the extinction of the life of his littlest child, but will leap to lay down his own life for it, shall God do less? The scene is shifted. The answer is sure. The scales stand on end. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father?"

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE ACTION of Canada's parliament in passing a law to estop the export of liquor to the United States will grow in significance as it is thought upon. The prime minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, is himself the author of the bill. Public opinion is vigorously behind it. To the churches of Canada belongs great credit for raising the moral issue of Canada's complicity with law breakers, and for persistently developing a national conscience on the matter. In urging his bill the premier put forward, in addition to the ethical argument, a strong plea based upon the undefended boundaries of the two nations. So long as the United States is compelled in the enforcement of its prohibition law to guard the border with armed forces, there will exist an imminent peril of some incident arising which will create grave international tension. In the interest, therefore, of continued peace and friendship, Premier King asked that no liquor "destined for delivery in any country into which the importation of such liquor is prohibited by law," shall be released from any building or place in which such liquor is stored, and that no vessel having liquor on board destined for delivery in any such country shall be given clearance in any Canadian port. The effect of this friendly action by Canada will be far-reaching in the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment. It is an act without precedent in international relations. In making so magnificent a gesture of cooperation Canada subordinated her own pecuniary interest to the ideal of honorable intercourse and friendly relations with a neighbor people. And that neighbor will not soon forget it.

The Book of the Month

THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST IN MODERN CHRISTIANITY, *by John Baillie. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $2.*

HOW EASILY one may mistake the substance and merits of a new book by simply dipping into it at random and tasting it! That is what I did with this book of John Baillie's when it appeared last fall. After reading a few pages, I decided against it and put it up on the shelf. Recently, in a moment of leisure, I took it down and began to read at the beginning. I was amazed; and now my penitence for having made a snap judgment is as great as my amazement. Here is a book which approaches the person of Christ by a method that takes full account of the skeptical mood in which the modern mind reacts to the evangelical conception of Jesus. The method is to take Christianity as an historic event which emerged in the fellowship of the first disciples at and directly after Pentecost. This fellowship was itself a new kind of thing, informed with unique conceptions and motives, and possessed by a new dynamic. What was Christ's relation to this fellowship? He was its founder. It originated in the impression which his life had made upon those who associated with him. Their fellowship was ideally the reflection of his personal relationship with other persons and with God. In Christ they had seen God. The validity of their insight is to be tested and demonstrated by the worth of the fellowship. If the Christian fellowship is the ideal of humanity and the richest realization of God's presence with men, then something important—transcendently important—follows with respect to the person of Christ. I had planned to preach on the following Sunday a sermon on the authority of Jesus. When I came to deliver it I could hear frequent inner whisperings of reassurance coming directly from this book.

A Thought for the Month

IN CHRISTIANITY the initiative is always with God, never with man. Our human life is just our response to the active prompting of the living God. This conception distinguishes Christianity from all other faiths. Christians do not pray to God in order to change his mind, or to prevail upon him to give them something that he is withholding. Quite the contrary. In the fine paradox of Jesus we are taught, when we pray, to believe that we have already received the things we ask for! All our human love is the expression of the precedent love of God. We love because he first loves us. The forgiveness of our sin is not primarily the result of our repentance, for it is the forgiving goodness of God that leads us to repentance. God is always long beforehand with our soul. Before we seek him he is out in search of us, and when we think we are discovering some new truth we are in reality apprehending his revelation. There is a thesis abroad at the moment which passes under the name of Humanism. It is an attempt to induce men to forget their dependence upon God. The idea of God is the chief obstacle in the way of progress, say the humanists. He is a kind of cosmic nuisance. He clutters up the path. Let men quit thinking about God and counting upon him as a factor in the ethical and social enterprise, and go to work with their own intelligence and skill; they will succeed more quickly in attaining their moral goal. This shallow doctrine overlooks one fact which alone annihilates it: Man did not come here by his own volition; he was *brought* here. God was here before man arrived. And it is inconceivable that the power which brought man into existence—which created him—can be ignored in the high enterprises through which man hopes to fulfil his destiny.

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